



LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE AND ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Monday, May 18, 2020

Senator Rich Wardner, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Rich Wardner, Joan Heckaman, Oley Larsen; Representatives Josh Boschee, Karla Rose Hanson, Lawrence R. Klemin, Chet Pollert

Members absent: Senators John Grabinger and Jerry Klein; Representative Scott Louser

Others present: John Bjornson and Kyle W. Forster, Legislative Council, Bismarck

Chairman Wardner said the committee members are meeting remotely, and the meeting is being live streamed to the public.

Chairman Wardner said the meeting was called so the committee members could consider information technology upgrades for committee meeting rooms and the legislative chambers in case the Legislative Assembly will need to convene a remote session before the end of the year. He said federal funds may be available to cover the costs of the upgrades.

Chairman Wardner called on Mr. John Bjornson, Director, Legislative Council, for a discussion of the needs for a possible remote session before the end of the year. Mr. Bjornson said the Legislative Council staff have researched options for video streaming capabilities, high-definition video cameras, remote testimony, remote voting, and other upgrades.

Chairman Wardner called on Mr. Kyle W. Forster, Information Technology Manager, Legislative Council, for a presentation regarding technology upgrades to committee meeting rooms, video streaming legislative committee meetings, and selling used legislative branch computers. Mr. Forster said legislative committee rooms now have digital projectors with HDMI connections. He said legislative meetings during April and the first half of May were live streamed to the public, and the meetings had between 85 and 248 live viewers. He said the pilot project for video streaming from the Harvest Room and Roughrider Room is in progress but had to be modified to allow for remote meeting participation by legislators and presenters due to Coronavirus (COVID-19). He said the information technology team was testing and successfully implementing several methods of remote participation in legislative committee meetings.

In response to a question from Representative Boschee, Mr. Forster said there were some equipment problems requiring equipment and configuration changes earlier in the pilot project, but the problems had been resolved.

In response to questions from Representative Klemin, Mr. Forster said the pilot project cost \$100,082 but was originally anticipated to cost \$91,405. He said the cost difference is due to necessary equipment changes and labor costs. He said the \$100,082 includes the cost to upgrade rooms for remote meetings.

Mr. Bjornson said the \$100,082 for the pilot project is not eligible for reimbursement from federal funds. He said federal funds would be needed to prepare for a possible remote legislative session before the end of the year. He said the estimated cost for the new project includes the cost to update the Prairie Room.

In response to a question from Chairman Wardner, Mr. Forster said vendors have said they are available to make the upgrades to all committee rooms and the chambers by the December 2020 organizational session.

It was moved by Representative Pollert, seconded by Representative Hanson, and carried on a roll call vote, that, to prepare for the possibility of the Legislative Assembly needing to meet remotely prior to the

end of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee approve the expenditure of up to \$750,000 of federal funds to be received from the Information Technology Department for the purchase and installation of equipment and other costs necessary to prepare the Legislative Assembly and its standing committees to meet remotely. Senators Wardner and Heckaman and Representatives Boschee, Hanson, Klemin, and Pollert voted "aye." Senator Larsen voted "nay."

Mr. Forster said the new computers, keyboards, and iPads had been received and will be distributed to legislators. He said legislators who have paid their computer use fees are eligible to purchase their current computers. He said he does not recommend purchasing the current laptops due to hard drive problems.

In response to a question from Representative Klemin, Mr. Forster said the operating system for the iPads likely will not be supported by Apple within a couple years.

It was moved by Senator Heckaman, seconded by Representative Pollert, and carried on a roll call vote that the laptops be offered for sale to legislators for \$200 and the iPads be offered for sale to legislators for \$200. Senators Wardner, Heckaman, and Larsen and Representatives Boschee, Hanson, Klemin, and Pollert voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

No further business appearing, Chairman Wardner adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Claire Ness
Counsel